

# Conservationists call for increased focus on coastal ecosystems

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The world's coastal marine ecosystems are being overlooked, both in terms of their ecological importance and their potential as a rallying point for conservation. Writing in *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* Project Seahorse Director Dr. Amanda Vincent argues that increased protections are needed for the first 10 metres of depth of the world's oceans, where the richest diversity of marine habitats and animal life can be found and where most ocean-related human activity takes place.

This argument is being put forward by Dr Vincent at the "Shallow Seas," a Zoological Society of London (ZSL) talk happening on November 8th.

"More than 1.2 billion people live near the ocean, which puts tremendous pressure on these [coastal ecosystems](#). For example, [bottom trawling](#) and other forms of fishing are primarily active in the shallows, emptying and flattening important habitats," says Vincent.

Globally, 67% of wetlands, 65% of seagrasses, and 48% of other submerged aquatic vegetation have been lost over approximately the last century. *The effects of changes in sea level, storm intensity and ocean acidity are all most pronounced in very shallow waters.*

*"Despite the clamours of concern for many marine conservation problems, the threats to the fragile ecosystems in coastal shallows are grossly underappreciated," says Dr. Heather Koldewey, Section Head for Global Programmes at ZSL and Project Seahorse's Associate Director.*

*Because billions of people live, work, and play in or near these coastal areas, Vincent and Koldewey believe they have great potential as a rallying point for [ocean conservation](#).*

*"People relate to the seaside," says Vincent. "Indeed it's the only part of the ocean most people ever experience. They are also associated strongly connected to cultures and religions. As conservationists we need to look more closely at these ecosystems and their campaign potential."*

*The ZSL's Shallow Seas event (Nov. 8th at 6 p.m.) marks a first step towards this. The talk will be a wide-ranging discussion on the future of the world's coastal marine [ecosystems](#).*

**More information:** [www.zsl.org/science/events/sha ... low-seas.552.EV.html](http://www.zsl.org/science/events/sha...low-seas.552.EV.html)

Provided by Wiley

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